

On all these issues, we have to look for sensible common ground, rooted in common sense, and I believe there is room for people of good will to work together to find it.

Even as I say that, I am mindful that issues involving the second amendment rights and violence in the past fueled deep passions. Suspicion and passions have run deep and wide on both sides of this debate, including in this Chamber, and there is a lot of distrust to overcome.

I am here to keep faith with the people of Newtown who have grabbed my arm and said, "We have to do something." That is my commitment. I will work with the President and my colleagues in the Senate regardless of party or geography. I will work with any organization that is willing to engage in a thoughtful, constructive discussion about what steps to take to avoid tragedy such as the Newtown shootings in the future.

I will work to find a solution to this crisis, because it is a crisis, and I will not be deterred by any organization or campaign that uses scare tactics or intimidation. Because there was nothing more frightening, nothing more horrifying, than looking into the eyes of the parents who came out of that firehouse in Sandy Hook who lost their babies last Friday. That is any parent's worst nightmare.

I know there are some who say we can never do anything about the problem of gun violence; that we are entrenched as a nation and so polarized as a political body that we will continue to wring our hands at every massacre and never take action. Yet sometimes events happen that so horrify our country and our fellow citizens that they change the nature of the discussion. They change the political ground under us. They are a tectonic shift, and I believe the massacre of the innocent children and their loving teachers in Newtown is exactly such an event.

Yesterday, some of my Senate colleagues had the courage to join this call for action and say publicly we cannot go on as before. I wish to thank, particularly, Senator MANCHIN and Senator WARNER. Their heroic stance is an invitation, indeed a challenge, to every other Member of the Senate to join in this common effort to find common ground and at long last do something to stop the killing.

I also wish to thank, particularly, Senator REID, our majority leader, for his leadership in calling for a meaningful and thoughtful debate on gun violence.

"We have to do something. We have to do something. We have to do something." That is what people in Newtown have beseeched me over and over. I believe the American people agree. This is our moment, and we are the people to do it. We can. I ask each of my colleagues to listen to those voices and to hear their own hearts.

I yield the floor.

The ACTING PRESIDENT pro tempore. The Senator from Vermont.

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, first, I wish to join my thoughts on those of the two Senators from Connecticut and the Senator who just spoke, Senator BLUMENTHAL. He and I talked this weekend during these terrible times, and I told him the Judiciary Committee and the Department of Justice, on behalf of all the victims, were standing by to help them in any way they can.

REMEMBERING DANIEL K. INOUE

Mr. LEAHY. Mr. President, today is the first day since Hawaii became a State that it is not represented by DAN INOUE, either as a House Member or as Senator.

As I look at my dear friend's desk with the traditional white flowers, I can't tell you how much it pains me. He was one of the greatest Members of this body ever to have served and a dear friend to so many of us. He was perhaps the best role model for public service any American could ask for. Senator INOUE's story is one of great passion for his people, commitment to his calling of public service, and dedication to finding a better way forward for all Americans, a true patriot.

A soldier in World War II, a veteran of the Armed Forces, he fought for the freedom of the Nation he so loved and believed in. The Nation finally recognized that, making him a recipient of our Congressional Medal of Honor.

As a representative of Hawaii, he dedicated his career to establishing and solidifying a place for his State in Washington so generations of Hawaiians to come might know the benefits of what he did not have, Federal support for such important causes such as higher education, transportation, health care, and security. His advocacy was never in vain, and the people of Hawaii benefited immensely from his service.

But I think his efforts to bring people together is unmatched. The grace with which he conducted his work should inspire all of us, as it does me. He was the man who could reach out to both sides of the aisle, make friends and make peace. He poured his heart and soul into the Senate. He was first and foremost a person of the Senate, and we all felt his passion and concern for the work of this body. There is no doubt he is going to be greatly missed in these halls. He was a mentor. He was a friend. We traveled together. Our wives were friends.

The reason I didn't speak last night, I opened my desk and looked again—the desk I have now, this seat, I inherited from DAN INOUE—and his name is inscribed in it. As the distinguished Acting President pro tempore knows, we inscribe our names in our desks, and DAN INOUE's is there. When I looked at that last night I was overcome with emotion and so I did not speak then.

I realize I am delaying things a couple of minutes here, but when I think of my friend and I think of his name, I remember he said he wanted to be remembered as having represented his people and all Americans honestly and to the best of his ability. He filled that. He filled that. We all know he gave his everything to the Senate, and his legacy is for us to continue the work he has done.

Mr. President, I yield the floor.

ADMINISTRATION OF OATH TO SENATOR PATRICK J. LEAHY AS PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE OF THE SENATE FOR THE 112TH CONGRESS

The VICE PRESIDENT. The senior Senator from Vermont, the President pro tempore elect, will be escorted to the desk for the oath of office by the Senator from Nevada [Mr. REID] and the junior Senator from Vermont [Mr. SANDERS].

The President pro tempore elect, escorted by Senators REID and SANDERS, advanced to the desk of the Vice President; the oath was administered to him by the Vice President; and he subscribed to the oath in the Official Oath Book.

(Applause, Senators rising)

NOTIFYING THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ELECTION OF A PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE OF THE U.S. SENATE

The VICE PRESIDENT. The majority leader.

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 622.

The VICE PRESIDENT. The clerk will report the resolution by title.

The assistant legislative clerk read as follows:

A Resolution (S. Res. 622) notifying the House of Representatives of the election of a President pro tempore.

There being no objection, the Senate proceeded to consider the resolution.

Mr. REID. I ask unanimous consent that the resolution be agreed to, and the motion to reconsider be laid upon the table, with no intervening action or debate.

The VICE PRESIDENT. Without objection, it is so ordered.

The resolution (S. Res. 622) was agreed to, as follows:

S. RES. 622

Resolved, That the House of Representatives be notified of the election of the Honorable Patrick J. Leahy as President of the Senate pro tempore.

NOTIFYING THE PRESIDENT OF THE UNITED STATES OF THE ELECTION OF A PRESIDENT PRO TEMPORE OF THE U.S. SENATE

Mr. REID. Mr. President, I ask unanimous consent that the Senate proceed to the consideration of S. Res. 623.